

Message Text

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SUBJ: KOREAN MEDIA ON US-RELATED TOPICS, APRIL 27

REF: SEOUL 3480 (DTG 260903Z APR 78)

SUMMARY: FRONT PAGES ARE DOMINATED BY TWO STORIES, THE STRATTON INITIATIVE AND THE IMPENDING BRZEZINSKI VISIT. ALLOWING FOR A FEW MISGIVINGS, THE RESPONSE TO BOTH IS POSITIVE. END SUMMARY.

1. PASSAGE OF STRATTON AMENDMENT TAKES SEOUL BY SURPRISE. IN LONG COMMENTARY, DONG A ILBO OBSERVES THAT THE CONSERVATIVE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, ANTAGONIZED BY CARTER'S HANDLING OF ANTI-WITHDRAWAL FLAG OFFICERS (TRANSFER OF SINGLAUB, PASSOVERS OF ADM WEISNER, GEN ROGERS, FOR CNO AND CHMN, J C OF S), AS WELL AS B-1 AND NEUTRON BOMB DECISIONS, WAS EXPECTED TO OFFER SOME OPPOSITION OT WITHDRAWAL PLAN, "BUT NOBODY, ESPECIALLY AFTER CARTER CUT THE SIZE OF THE INITIAL WITHDRAWAL CONTINGENT, EVER EXPECTED THE EAGLE ELEMENT IN CONGRESS TO FLING DOWN THE GANTLET IN SUCH A DIRECT FASHION. "OF COURSE", ADDS DONG A, "IT IS A PURELY STRATEGIC

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ASSESSMENT WHICH FUNDAMENTALLY UNDERLIES THE COMMITTEE'S ACTION". DONG A EXPECTS A BRUTAL FLOOR FIGHT OVER THE AMENDMENT, BUT RAISES NO DOUBTS ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION'S WILLINGNESS TO COMPLY WITH SUCH A RESTRICTION SHOULD IT PASS CONGRESS. EXCEPT FOR A FEW QUALMS ABOUT THE ROK'S SEEMING TO BECOME A VIRTUAL FIXTURE OF CONGRESSIO-
NAL CONTROVERSY, THE REST OF THE PRESS FOLLOWS, IF LESS

ARTICULATELY, THE DONG A LINE.

2. BRZEZINSKI VISIT. WHILE NOT DISPLEASED AT THE VISIT OF SUCH A KEY FIGURE, THE PRESS DOURLY SUGGESTS THAT THE TIMING, COMING SHORTLY AFTER TITO'S VISIT TO DC AND HUA KUO FENG'S EXPECTED MAY 5-8 VISIT TO PYONGYANG, IMPLIES THAT ZB MEANS TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF A TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE IN PEKING, STOPPING OFF HERE MERELY TO INFORM LOCAL OFFICIALS OF THE AGREEMENT REACHED IN ANY. EVEN HOLBROOKE'S DENIAL: "BRZEZINSKI IS NOT GOING TO KOREA TO PERSUADE THE ROKG ON A TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE" IS QUESTIONED -- WHY WAS IT VOLUNTEERED? ASKS DONG A ILBO. "MOFA OFFICIAL" IN GOSSIP COLUMN CALLS ZB'S VISIT "UNIMPORTANT" (THOUGH DONG A CLEARLY DISAGREES). ALL THE FOREBODING, THOUGH, SEEMS LARGELY OFFSET BY GRATIFICATION AT VISIT BY ONE AS RESPECTED AS BRZEZINSKI IS HERE, AS WELL AS BY ADVANCE NOTIFICATION TO THE ROKG OF THE DESIRE OF HIGH-LEVEL VISITOR TO PEKING TO INCLUDE SEOUL ON HIS ITINERARY - CALLED A CHANGE FROM PAST PRACTICE.

3. HUA KUO-FENG VISIT TO PYONGYANG: SCHEDULED TENTATIVELY FOR MAY 5-8. KYODO STORY, QUOTING TWO JAPANESE DIETMEN; ONE OF WHOM WAS SUPPOSEDLY INFORMED BY CHINESE DEPUTY PREMIER, THE OTHER BY DPRK AMBASSADOR IN PEKING. NEITHER NCNA NOR THE NORTH KOREAN BROADCASTERS HAVE MENTIONED THE STORY AS OF 1605 27 APR.
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